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Bronze Grizzly arrives at University of Montana

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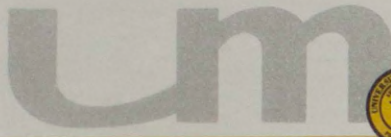
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BRONZE GRIZZLY ARRIVES
AT UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

MISSOULA---

A three-year dream about a grizzly bear mascot for the University of Montana became a reality Wednesday when a bronze model of the animal designed by Rudy Autio was unloaded at the UM Physical Plant Warehouse.

The 7-foot-tall likeness of the grizzly, which weighs approximately three tons, arrived by truck from San Francisco, Calif., where it was cast in metal by the San Francisco Art Foundry under the direction of Ono de Ruyter, owner of the firm.

Autio, a professor of art at the University, fashioned clay and plaster-silica models of the bear 18 months ago at his home near Missoula. The final plaster-silica likeness of the bear was shipped to San Francisco, where the bronze version of the statue was completed by the California firm.

Thomas J. Collins, director of the UM Foundation, said the bronze statue is expected to be erected in a day or so in what now is the Baby Oval near the University Lodge, near the west entrance to the campus.

After the grizzly is erected on a concrete podium in the Baby Oval, the area will be known as Grizzly Circle. The podium on which the bear rests will be surrounded by an evergreen plant and concrete seating facilities for the convenience of passersby.

Autio viewed the huge bronze statue Wednesday and said he is "very pleased with the result."

He said he feels the San Francisco Art Foundry "did a fine job of casting."

"It's quite impressive to see the finished product after working on clay and plaster-silica models of the animal for so long," Autio commented.

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Collins said only private funds, through donations to the UM Foundation, have been used to finance casting of the grizzly and construction of podium and surrounding area of the Grizzly Circle. He said cost of casting and shipping the bear was about \$12,000, a substantial portion of which was contributed by Joseph Thiebes, a UM alumnus from Great Falls. / First phase of Grizzly Circle construction came to about \$11,595.

Autio credited the University administration, trustees and the UM student body with developing the original ideas for construction of the bronze grizzly bear about three years ago.

He said two University alumni-Brian J. Persha, formerly of Great Falls, and John S. Murphy, formerly of Snohomish, Wash., assisted him in making the early models of the grizzly.

Persha is now working at a pottery school in Billings and teaching at the Yellowstone County Fine Arts Center there. Murphy, who taught ceramics and design while enrolled as a graduate student in fine arts at UM, is slated to teach this fall at Kenosha, Wisc.

Bronze for the statue was donated by the Northern Pacific Railway Co. and the Pacific Hide & Fur Co., Missoula, and Autio contributed the time necessary for sculpturing the grizzly.

The grizzly was delivered to Missoula by the Missoula Distributing Co. through the firm's owner, Norman Thyfault. Walter N. Ladwig, who drove the truck from San Francisco to Missoula, said he had no problems bringing the statue to Missoula.

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